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Subject: EOC Spot Report: Region 6, Explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX - Update #9

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EOC Spot Report: Region 6, Explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX - Update #9

PORT NECHES, TX, NRC#1264987

US Environmental Protection Agency
Report as of 12/02/2019 5:09 PM

Overview: Early in the morning on November 27, the National Response Center received a report about an explosion at TPC Group Facility in Port Neches, TX. The facility is regulated under the Risk Management Program. At approximately 1400 CST on November 27, a secondary explosion occurred. Residents within a four-mile radius of the facility were ordered to evacuate. At 1000 hours on November 29, the Jefferson County judge rescinded the mandatory evacuation. One fire is still burning in the process area. TPC will continue to provide water suppression to the process area until the fire extinguishes itself

EPA, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and TPC teams have been conducting air monitoring throughout the evacuation zone. TPC plans to stage six totes of foam for vapor suppression on December 2. The Safety Data Sheets for the foam initially used on November 27 confirmed that the approximate 1,320 gallons did contain PFOS compounds. As of 1700 on November 30, 2019, there is no longer a discharge of water from the 201 Outfall. This has reduced the water level in the affected canal.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: TCEQ notified Texas Parks and Wildlife of the deceased fish on November 30. EPA notified US Fish and Wildlife Service as well. On December 1, TCEQ has activated their Surface Water Quality Management Team (SWQMT) for water sampling in response to the report of dead fish. The Port Neches-Groves Independent School District was be closed on Monday, December 2.

Unified Command received a report of three dead birds on December 2, 2019. TPC has contacted Wildlife Response Services to respond to the incident. A Wildlife Hotline has been established for the incident and distributed to response personnel.

The EOC was visited by US Congressman Randy Weber and State Representative Dade Phelan.

EPA Actions: EPA is serving as the lead federal agency for response efforts. As of 1700, December 2, EPA is deploying 3 personnel and 9 contractors to Port Neches, and 3 EPA personnel and 6 contractors are supporting the response remotely. A Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) team started visual inspections today along the 201 Canal and Star Lake Canal. The team included state, federal and facility representation. The SCAT team findings will be developed into a clean-up action plan as determined to be necessary.

ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the morning of December 2, 2019 and reported no detections.

A Story Map has been created for the incident and is public at the <https://response.epa.gov/south4groupfire> website.

Media Interest: Medium

Media Links:

<https://www.12newsnow.com/article/news/local/power-city/law-firms-taking-action-against-tpc-group-following-port-neches-plant-explosion-fire/502-9fe0ca88-fc8f-4dd9-9811-bc71954e8020>

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-11-29/evacuation-order-lifted-as-huge-texas-plant-fire-contained>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/massive-fire-chemical-plant-southeastern-texas-contained-n1093331>

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/27/us/port-neches-plant-explosion/index.html>

<https://kfor.com/2019/12/01/texas-chemical-plant-explosion-causes-extensive-damage-to-city/>

The EPA will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed

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